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[Dear Permission to be Powerful Reader, In my upcoming memoir, I mention a...](#)



Dear *Permission to be Powerful* Reader,

In my upcoming memoir, I mention a scene from the movie *Christine* that's seared into my mind.

A woman who, in a shocking and heartbreaking moment, blew her brains out on live television. That scene was raw and disturbing, and in many ways, it marked me. It left an imprint on my psyche, a reminder of how despair can drive people to do unimaginable things to those of us who haven't walked that path.

The reason it stayed with me, though, wasn't just because of the shock or the tragedy—it stayed with me because I understood the despair she must've felt—the sense of feeling trapped, hopeless, and completely overwhelmed by life's challenges. Depression can be that all-encompassing. It can feel like a prison that closes in until you can't see any way out. And,

tragically, for Christine, that's what it felt like for her—there was no escape, no hope.

That understanding hit me in a personal way after my friend Mark committed suicide a few years ago. Mark was someone I had known for a long time—someone I thought I could rely on, someone I thought was doing okay. But, like many people struggling with their mental health, he hid it well. He wore the mask of someone who had it all together. But deep inside, he was battling his demons, and in the end, those demons won.

My Friend's Death Was a Wake-up Call

It reminded me that no one is immune from the depths of despair.

And that even if I felt fine right now, I should never underestimate my history of depression. I thought I'd never be in a terrible place again, that I was over it. But I've realized that depression doesn't have a "final chapter."

It's not something you check off a list and move on from. It can always resurface—unexpectedly, out of nowhere, and much stronger than you remember.

The thing is, I think we all have that inner voice that tells us, "I'll never go back there. I'm better now. I won't fall into that pit again." But deep down, I know that's not the truth. It's always possible. Depression doesn't care how many years you've spent in the light or how many victories you've had—it can pull you back into the dark when you least expect it.

I've had moments when I thought I'd never feel that weight again. But if I'm honest with myself, I know I could. That's why I don't ever take my mental health for granted. It's something I have to keep working on—every single day.

And that's the reality of depression—it's not a one-time battle. It's an ongoing fight, and sometimes the fight gets more brutal, the demons get louder, and you feel like you're losing ground. And when you start feeling like you're slipping, when you begin thinking those dark thoughts, when

suicidal ideation starts creeping in, you need to talk to your therapist immediately. Reaching out is not a sign of weakness—it's a sign of strength. It's recognizing that you're in danger and taking the necessary steps to save yourself.

I don't care how many times I've been in therapy or how many tools I've learned to cope with my mental health—I know that suicidal ideation means you need to act. You must speak to someone because you're walking a dangerous line. And it's not something you can afford to ignore. If you feel like you're losing your grip and there's no way out, you don't have to go through it alone. Reach out. Talk to someone who can help you get through the darkest moments.

I've been there. I've had those thoughts. I've had the moments where I felt like there was no point. But I've learned that talking—whether it's to a therapist, a friend, or anyone who will listen—is the one thing that can pull you back from the edge. Depression may never entirely leave me, but I don't have to face it alone. And neither should anyone else.

So, if you're reading this and feeling like I've felt, remember this: you matter. Your life has value. You are not alone. And if the darkness is starting to creep in, if you're feeling overwhelmed and like there's no way out, reach out. There's always a way back. But you have to ask for help. You must have the courage to admit that you need someone to guide you back to the light.

And if there's one thing I've learned through all of this—we don't get to decide when the battle's over. But we can choose to keep fighting. And that's the first step toward healing.

Depression Doesn't Always Announce Its Return

It creeps in quietly, almost imperceptibly, and before you know it, you're back in that suffocating place where every thought feels like a weight, and every step forward feels like a battle you can't win. It's easy to think, "I'll never be that person again," or "I've come so far, I'm immune to this." But

when it hits, you realize just how fragile mental health can be and how easily you can slip back into old patterns.

When I was dealing with depression in the past, it was a silent war. It was a war fought in my mind's silence, where I sometimes felt like I was losing before I knew what was happening. It's not like one day you [wake up](#) and say, "I'm depressed." It's more subtle than that. It's in the way you begin to disengage from the things you used to love. It's in how you start to avoid people, close yourself off, and waste time instead of doing things that matter. It's in the emotional weight of standing still while life keeps moving forward around you.

I remember feeling like I was standing still, waiting for anything to pull me out of it. And when I couldn't find that "something," I sunk deeper. That's the trick depression plays on you—it makes you feel like nothing matters. Nothing is worth doing. And you believe it. It's the silent sabotage that wears you down.

That's when running, with all its grueling consistency, became my lifeline. It wasn't just about the physical act of running. It was about discipline. It was about forcing myself to show up, even when I didn't want to. I didn't feel like running most days, but I did it anyway. And that one simple act—putting one foot in front of the other—was a defiant move against the mental stagnation that depression had me in.

But even then, there were days when the depression was more potent than the will to run. When the act of moving felt impossible, it was on those days when I couldn't get myself to run that I saw the importance of asking for help. Depression isn't something you can push through by willpower alone. You need someone to help you understand that you don't have to carry it all alone.

It started small.

It started with just a mile

I didn't set out to run 200 days straight, lose 50 pounds, or breakthrough years of depression. I started with something far simpler: a mile a day. For 30 days, I told myself I would run just one mile every day. No more, no less. Just a mile. I figured it would be enough if I could show up for that one small thing.

The first few days were tough. It wasn't about physical exertion but about getting my head in the right place. The depression had clouded my mind, and even the thought of stepping outside felt like a monumental task. But I did it. I ran my mile. Each day, I felt a little less like a failure and a little more like someone who could at least show up for themselves.

After the first 30 days, I felt a shift. I didn't want to stop. So, I pushed myself further: two miles a day for the next 30 days. I could already feel the small victories stacking up. Running two miles felt like a breeze compared to the mental hurdle of just starting the first mile. But I didn't stop there. I kept adding more—three miles, then four, then five.

With each increase, the change in me wasn't just physical. Yes, the weight started to drop, slowly at first, but consistently. But it was the mental shift that genuinely amazed me. With each new mile, I began to feel like I was breaking something inside me. I was chipping away at the depression that had held me hostage for years.

I wasn't just losing weight—I was losing the weight of my thoughts, the weight of the hopelessness I'd carried around. The running became more than exercise. It became my daily reminder that I had the power to change. And when I hit the five-mile mark, I didn't just feel lighter physically; I felt lighter mentally. I had broken the three-year depression that had plagued me, and I had done it with a tiny step at a time.

By The End, I Lost 50 Pounds

But the fundamental transformation wasn't in the number on the scale—it was in the freedom I felt. I had run through my darkest moments, proving that I could fight and had the strength to push through the most challenging

times. And I'd done it not by conquering giant leaps but by taking one step, one mile, one day at a time.

The process wasn't fast. It wasn't glamorous. It didn't happen overnight. But it worked. Slowly, each step built upon the last until I looked back and realized how far I had come—not just in miles, but in life.

When Mark took his life, I was left with so many unanswered questions. How could I have known? How could I have helped? Why didn't I see the signs? We all carry guilt after someone takes their own life, whether it's spoken or unspoken. But Mark's death also became a wake-up call, a reminder that no one is immune. Depression can affect anyone, no matter how strong they appear and no matter how well they hide it. It can creep up even on those who seem like they've got it all together.

Mark's death made me realize that I can never underestimate my history of depression. I can't be so arrogant as to think, "I've conquered it; I'll never return." No, I have to stay vigilant. I have to remember that depression isn't something that disappears because I've had a good year or an incredible streak of running. It's a persistent beast that can return with even more strength when you least expect it.

And that's why I'm so adamant about the importance of therapy—particularly when it comes to suicidal ideation. If you start thinking, "Maybe it would be better if I weren't here," or "Would anyone even notice if I just disappeared?" those thoughts are your signal to reach out to someone immediately. It doesn't matter how long it's been since you've felt this way—talk to your therapist, reach out to a friend, or even a hotline. Please don't wait until it gets worse. Don't stay silent.

Talking can feel like the hardest thing in the world when you're in that dark place. The weight of those thoughts can make you feel like they're the only truth. But speaking them aloud is like breaking the spell. It's the first step in getting your power back.

I've had my moments of thinking the darkness would swallow me whole. But every time I reached out for help, every time I got up and talked—whether to a therapist or a friend—it was like a little piece of the weight

lifted. And sure, those pieces didn't lift all at once, and it didn't always feel like progress. But it was progress. Every conversation and small action toward seeking help was a step out of the pit.

Suicidal Ideation is a Big Deal

It's not something to ignore or think will pass on its own. It's a sign that you need help. It's a sign that you're not okay, and that's perfectly okay. You don't have to be OK all the time. But when you're not, you need to reach out. It's not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of strength. It's a strength you might not feel now, but it's there. And it's the key to surviving, healing, and moving forward.

In my new memoir, I'll share the darkest parts of myself—the struggles with mental health, the intense fight against depression, and the moments where I thought I'd never escape. But I've also shared the ways I've fought back, the small victories, and the strength from choosing to stay alive. Depression doesn't define me. But it's part of my story. It's not a war that ever fully ends, but I fight daily.

And if you're reading this, struggling with your demons, know this: You are not alone. Reach out. Talk. Please don't wait until it's too late. Healing starts with that first step.

Until next time,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to read "Anton Volney". The letters are fluid and connected, with long, sweeping strokes. The "A" is particularly large and prominent, starting with a long horizontal line that extends to the left. The "V" is also large and has a long, sweeping stroke that extends to the right. The signature is written in a cursive-like style.

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist



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